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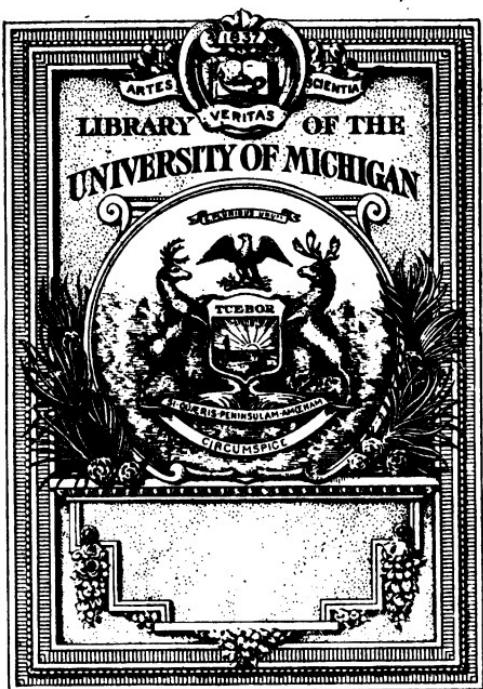
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THE GIFT OF  
Mass. Hist. Soc.

# **HALF CENTURY SERMON,**

**DELIVERED ON**

**SUNDAY MORNING, APRIL 24, 1842,**

**AT**

**J A M A I C A   P L A I N .**

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**By THOMAS GRAY, D. D.**

**Minister of the Congregational Church there.**

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**BOSTON:**

**PRINTED BY I. R. BUTTS.... NO. 2 SCHOOL STREET.**

**1842.**

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## N O T I C E.

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THE following Discourse was intended exclusively for the audience to whom it was addressed. Desirous to preserve the facts it contained relative to their origin as a Society, they have requested its publication. Some parts are here thrown into notes, that then occupied a place in the body of the Discourse — information being the only thing intended. It is still hoped that this consideration will both account for, and justify, a *minuteness*, which to a stranger may appear unnecessary, but to a Parishioner, will be interesting like family portraits, estimable only to the domestic circle, whose ancestry they transmit. To that Society to whom the author has so long and so happily ministered, he now affectionately and respectfully inscribes it, with his most earnest prayers for their temporal and immortal welfare.

JAMAICA PLAIN, April 28, 1842.



SELECTION OF SCRIPTURES READ,  
AND HYMNS SUNG,

ARE INTRODUCED BY REQUEST.

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1. Brethren, my heart's desire, and prayer to God, for you all is, that you may be saved.
2. I wish, above all things, that thou mayest prosper, and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.
3. I rejoiced greatly when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even that thou walkest in the truth.
4. Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, which have witnessed of thy charity before the Church. I have no greater joy than to see my children walking in the truth.
5. We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their works' sake, and be at peace amongst yourselves— holding fast the possession of your faith, without wavering — for faithful is he that hath promised.
6. Be not as children tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive you. But proving what is that good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God.
7. Wherefore, give the more earnest heed to the things thou hast heard, lest at any time thou let them slip. For if the word spoken

by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape so great salvation ?

8. Gird up the loins of your minds then, and be sober, and hope to the end. Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

9. For if ye do these things, ye shall never be moved ; and so an abundant entrance shall be ministered unto you into the kingdom of our God.

10. Brethren, I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course. I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give at that day. And not to me only, but unto all them also, that love his appearing.

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[Then sung 511th Hymn, C. M., from 5th verse.]

5. If I a faithful servant am,  
    Of Jesus and of God,  
I need not fear the closing scene,  
    Nor dread the appointed road.

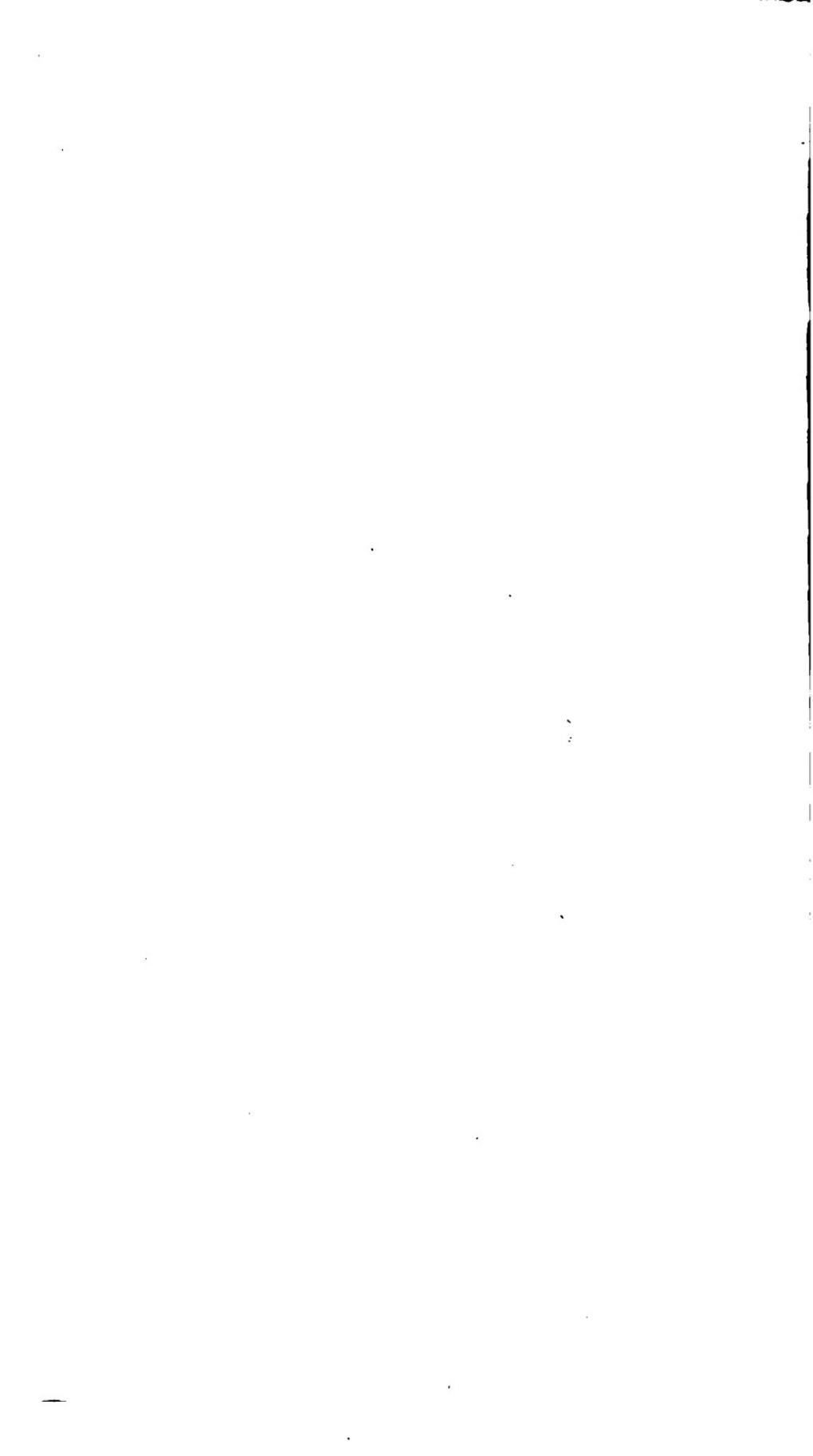
6. This scene will all my labors end;  
    This road conduct on high;  
With comfort I'll review the past,  
    And triumph though I die.

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**S E R M O N.**

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## SERMON.

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JOB 14: 6.

TILL HE SHALL ACCOMPLISH, AS A HIRELING HIS DAY.

THE days of our years, says the Sacred Poet, are threescore years and ten. This is the appointed time to man upon earth. And afterwards the faded look, the grey hairs gathering thick upon him, the bald head, the dimmed eye, the deafened ear, and the faltering step — all admonish him that his tabernacle of clay is beginning to totter, and must shortly fall — that it is now almost time to be at home, and that the short residue of his continuance here, to use the strong expression of another, is an encroachment upon eternity.

The sweet psalmist of Israel adds — Yet if by reason of strength they be fourscore years. Some persons, from vigorous constitution, continued activity and elastic spirits, never suffering themselves to grow old in mind, however they may in years — and every man may prolong his term of activity and of youth on the one hand, by wholesome energies, or on the other, contract them and become old, by self-indulgence and sluggishness — never suffering himself, as the wise saying is, “to rust out, but to wear out” — working while the day lasts, be that day longer or shorter, reach their fourscore years ; and some even go beyond that period ; yet, is that strength labor and sorrow, and it is soon cut off and we fly away. But if any one give vent to morbid feelings, he will find himself, even while a young man, shrivelled up into an old one. As a man thinketh so will he always be. And if he be not slothful in

business, but fervent in spirit serving the Lord, by continued service to his fellow-beings around him, he, in the truest sense, will be young, even while far advanced in years, and bring forth fruit too in old age. And more than one, I this moment see before me, who answers to this enviable description.

Now that period of most vigorous activity, and, certainly, of most extensive usefulness, assigned to man, by the psalmist in our text, I have already past. And a day or two since I completed a ministry of fifty years among you,— forty-nine and one month of which, I have been your *ordained* minister. Fifty years since, I preached my first sermon to this Society. The fulfilment of previous engagements alone prevented my remaining then, as requested. But I promised to make no further ones and afterwards to return. The small pox, however, in the mean time, had broken out, and in the general alarm, the doors of this church were closed, till November the 11th, when I resumed my ministry here, and accepted a call on the 24th day of the next month to settle down in this place, with a small handful of people,— a people of exhausted means, but of noble hearts ; and here I have ever since continued, and have now accomplished, “for weal or for wo,” as a hireling my day.

To me, therefore, this is among the most solemn and thoughtful events of my life. I have ever been conservative in my feelings — I never forsook a friend, unless he had first forsaken me. I never forgot old friends in the accession of new ones, though the former may have passed away. And did not this occasion touch my heart, I should be destitute of the best affections of our nature. In the mouldering away of any ties that do not bind us to suffering, there is always something that is painful. But in the decay of those that “form one of the most tender relations of life — relations, which time has rendered venerable, and recollection hallowed ; which friendship made sweet, and religion sacred, I freely own that it saddens my heart,” and casts a shade around its gladness. These ties though not *now* severed, yet, I full well know, are *one by one*, gradually *loosening*. I have, heretofore, seen many whom I loved both of my earlier and later days, gathered peaceably to the tomb, and monuments of their worth were then erected, and still remain fresh in my heart.

I see a few others waiting, till their discharge shall come. Every

returning Sabbath, I discern around me, the faces of many of you, whom I look upon as my spiritual children, whose fathers and mothers, in by-gone days, were dear to me, and I to them. Many of you in your infancy I folded in my arms, and carried to the Baptismal Font ; and gave you back again to Him from whom you came, in covenant blessings never to be broken. And not a few of whom, I may hope one day to present before the "mercy seat," and say, these are the children thou gavest to me. I can express no better wish for them, than that they may be true scions of the original stock. For though it had its imperfections, as has every thing below the skies, it had along with them its all powerful redeeming qualities, worthy of the Pilgrim Fathers. And my mind still lingers fondly with cherished affection on their virtues, and it is my earnest prayer, that I may be worthy one day to be associated again, and to rejoice together with them in that brighter world, which is far removed from the power of chance, and from the reach of change.

From time immemorial a custom has prevailed in our churches, of delivering on an occasion like this, an appropriate discourse, containing a minute history of the Society, during the preceding half Century ; by means of which, the history of the town, the county, the Commonwealth, and finally the *country* may be preserved, and perpetuated in durable records. But we live in times, when the love of change, "inscribed upon all mortal things, has taken so boundless a sweep, as seems aiming to subvert all that is venerable in our institutions, long hallowed by sacred recollections," consecrated by holy associations, or grateful to the memory of our fathers ; so that now, even a fifth part of the former period is considered as ~~the~~ long ministry ;— and if any one continue twenty years with a people, with whom the connection, formerly, lasted, like that of man and wife, "till death them did part;" it is thought *high* time to give a similar discourse. And a similar one I gave six years since, in the forty-fourth year of my ministry ; not from the slightest distrust I ever entertained, even for a moment, of your fidelity or affection, but simply, because I considered it *possible*, if not even *probable*, that I might not live to reach the arrival of this day. And anxious that the history of this Parish, fully known in all its facts, by no one living, so much as by myself, from its earliest foundation, might be rescued from oblivion. I will here repeat part of it.

The Third, or Jamaica\* Plain Parish in Roxbury, had its origin in the piety of an amiable female. I refer to Mrs. Susanna, wife of Benjamin Pemberton. She was the daughter of Peter Faneuil, Esq., who, in 1740,† erected and gave to the Town of Boston, the far famed Hall which still bears his name; and who built, also, the dwelling-house, now standing here, recently known as late Dr. John Warren's Country Seat. This house Mrs. Pemberton with her husband, first occupied somewhere about the year 1766, or '7. Finding her situation too far removed from any place of public worship to render her attendance convenient, she proposed to her husband who possessed ample means, and had no children, or very near relations, to enter into the *then* very arduous undertaking of forming a new Parish out of the second, which extended almost to his own dwelling — of erecting this church, where we are now assembled, at his own expense, and of settling a minister therein, in whom they could alike enjoy the benefits of a social friend and a religious guide.

This Society, at that time, constituted a part of the second or Upper Parish, under the pastoral care of Rev. Nathaniel Walter, the limits of which extended not above eighty rods below the spot which this church now occupies. The proposed object Mr. Pemberton at length accomplished, in union with some little aid obtained from a few individuals who, by work performed by themselves on the building, or by contributing for the object the sum of £25 sterling, purchased to themselves pews here, and by paying what was then thought a considerable sum to the Upper Parish, to reconcile them to the separation. But their meeting-house being, at the time, very much decayed, and the erection of a new one becoming shortly necessary, favored the division more than any other circumstance. Nor did Mr. Pemberton neglect to avail himself of this advantage. He proposed to give by four instalments the sum of £533.6.8 sterling, to which Jamaica Plain Society agreed to add by similar instalments £133.1.6 sterling, amounting in the whole to £666.7.8. This was to aid the second Parish in rebuilding on the spot, where their present meeting-house stands, about one mile or more further from

\* See Appendix, Note A.

† He deceased in 1742, the year in which Faneuil Hall was finished.

our own, than the site which the old one occupied, and adjoining the burying ground on the hill — and that they might continue to pay their usual proportion of the parish charges till the incorporation of said new Society. The second parish meanwhile, was to consent to, and aid the separation of all the population on this side their old meeting-house, at the General Court in case of opposition. Besides which this church agreed to relinquish all their right in the property of the second church, and the furniture of the communion table. After due consideration the proposals were accepted, and the boundary lines of each parish being previously agreed on, a petition for an act of incorporation was presented in 1771, two years after the erection of this church ; and on the year following, 1772, the petition was granted, and the parish incorporated with the full and usual privileges of all other parishes.

In the month of September 1769, this house was raised, and in the course of a year completed with thirty-four square pews ; and three long seats for the poor, on each side the broad aisle next the pulpit on the ground floor. There were five narrow long pews in the front gallery against the wall, yet standing, and long seats for the singers below them, who then occupied the corner of the north-east gallery.

The late Rev. Joseph Jackson of Brookline, on the 31st of December, 1769, preached in it before its completion, the first sermon, and administered the first communion. His morning text was from Psalm lxv. 4th verse. “Blessed is the man whom thou choosest and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts. We shall be satisfied with the goodness of thine house, even thy holy temple.”

In the afternoon his text was from 1 Chron. xxii. 19th verse. “Now set your hearts and your soul to seek the Lord your God. Arise, therefore, and build ye the sanctuary of the Lord God, to bring the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and the holy vessels of God into the house that is to be built to the name of the Lord.”

The separation from the Second Parish, after various difficulties and delays, was, in the beginning of 1772, completely effected ; and thirty-five persons, with their estates, were incorporated into a distinct parish by the name of “The Third Parish or Precinct in Roxbury.”

The Rev. William Gordon, a Scotchman by birth, author of the History of the American Revolution, being highly recommended to Mr. Pemberton, having preached here for a short time previous, received a unanimous invitation June 5, 1772, to the pastoral charge of this flock, which he accepted July 3d following, and was installed over it on Monday morning, 6th of same month and year. On that occasion he preached his own sermon from 1 Cor. ix. 36th and 37th verses : " I therefore so run, not uncertainly ; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air. But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." Late Dr. Pemberton of Boston, gave the charge, and Mr. Jackson of Brookline extended the fellowship of the churches.

On the 13th of January, 1773, Benjamin Pemberton conveyed to the parish, under certain conditions, the house your present pastor now occupies, for the sole use and improvement of the then present and future ministers of this church.\*

The parish thus so far established, in May following, 1773, nine persons with their estates, and Mr. Pemberton at their head, all belonging to the *first* or *lower* parish, were, by an act of the General Court, separated from that, and united to ours, and the number then consisted of forty-four families.

It could scarcely be expected that these things should be accomplished, — a parish separated and new formed, without creating, at first, more or less unpleasant feelings in the minds of some, or calling forth harsh reflections from the lips of others. But if this ever were the fact, a perfect harmony has long since subsisted between the members of the three different societies.

The next thing contemplated was the union of this with the Upper Parish for an act of incorporation into a distinct town by themselves. For this object a simultaneous meeting was held in both parishes June 9th, 1777, in which it was voted unanimously that a petition be presented to the great and General Court, setting forth the situation of the said town, and the difficulty of attending town meetings, and praying the honorable Court to set off and incorporate said two precincts or parishes into one distinct or

\* Appendix, Note B.

~~separate town by the name of Washington."~~ But the records of neither parish contain any further information on the subject.

In the summer of 1775 one or more regiments were stationed ~~on~~ the Plain, and many of the soldiers quartered in different houses upon the inhabitants.

Governor Barnard's, now Mr. John Low's hill and grounds, with all the others surrounding, were covered with pitched tents.

Commodore Joshua Loring was compelled to leave his home, furniture, and every thing belonging to it, by flight. The house was confiscated, and converted into a hospital for a regiment, together with the estates likewise of Governor Barnard and Captain Hallowell ; and on the grounds of each many soldiers of the regiments stationed here were buried, who died of the small pox and other diseases. That on Commodore Loring's estate remains undisturbed, back of the dwelling-house, to this day. That on Governor Barnard's, which was near the little fish-pond on the rising ground towards the opposite road, has long since been ploughed over and destroyed ; in doing which, the workmen have at times interfered with, and disturbed some of the coffins. That on Capt. Hallowell's estate is no longer visible.

During the American Revolution, April 1st, 1778, the General Court or Provincial Congress held, for a time, their session in this house, on account of the prevailing small pox in Boston, and invited Dr. Gordon to officiate as Chaplain. But they became offended at his prayers, which they thought were rather intended to dictate the measures they ought to pursue, than to implore the divine direction of them. They therefore dismissed him ; and finding accommodations difficult to be had here, adjourned to Boston,\* the 30th. This gave great umbrage to the Doctor, and the more so, as many of his particular friends, and some who were even boarders with him at the time, voted for his dismissal.

In July, 1783, his late Excellency John Hancock, presented the first bell that was placed in our steeple. It had lately been removed from the new brick church, North-end, Boston.

For a long time, the Society had been desirous of obtaining a cemetery for the dead, nearer than those in either of the other par-

<sup>met</sup>  
\* Here they continued till May 27th, and on the 30th adjourned to Watertown.

ishes, and wished its location back of our church, where it now is. But Dr. Gordon strenuously and successfully resisted, contending that its putrefaction would injure the known healthiness of the inhabitants,— that it ought to be placed in the outskirts of the parish, in some retired situation, as far as possible apart from any population. But on the 14th of March, 1785, when the subject came before the parish meeting, “it was put to vote whether the ground behind the meeting-house stable, when wanted, shall be appropriated to a burying-yard, to bury the dead of the said parishioners ?” past in the affirmative. Dr. Gordon, notwithstanding, still resisted, and contended that the parish had no *legal* right to appropriate ground which they merely hired of the School Trustees\* for such a purpose. Nor was it so appropriated till after he left the parish in 1786.

In September, 1788, a difficulty first arose in respect to the waters of Jamaica Pond being drawn off for the supply of a corn mill, so far as to affect the wells of the inhabitants of the Plain, who considered them as altogether supplied by the pond. This difficulty terminated in a lawsuit ; John Marston, owner of the mill, plaintiff, and Martin Brimmer, David S. Greenough, and Capt. Daniel McCarthy, defendants (unsuccessful.) Afterwards, in 1795, Mr. Marston sold his mill and privileges in the waters of the pond, which had been granted by the town of Roxbury for said mill, to the Aqueduct Corporation, for supplying the town of Boston with Jamaica Pond water.†

With Rev. Dr. William Gordon, who on October 19th, 1807, finished his ministry and his life together, at the advanced age of eighty years, in his parish in Nevis Huntingtonshire, England, this society was happy and united for the space of near fourteen years ; when, conceiving it advantageous to his interest to return to England, that he might publish his history of the American Revolution, on terms more favorable than he could in this country, on the 6th October, 1785, he proposed a dissolution of his pastoral connection. His wishes met with some opposition from his parishioners at first ; but, “when he would not be persuaded, they ceased, saying the will of the Lord be done.” On March 17th,

\* Appendix, Note C.

† Appendix, Note D.

1786, it was accordingly dissolved, with the usual testimonials. His farewell sermon was preached from Phil. i. 27th and 28th verses : " Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ, that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, and that you stand fast in one spirit with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel ; and in nothing terrified by your adversaries ; which to them is an evident token of perdition, but unto you of salvation, and that of God."

During his connection with this society, he was a zealous politician, but not always equally prudent or judicious. Whilst here, he published a few political sermons, and one or two religious tracts. As a preacher he was popular, upright in his intentions, and respectable in his profession.

From this time, the people here were "as sheep without a shepherd." And in August following (1786) his departure, the parish, by committee, held some communication with Rev. Samuel West, then minister of Needham, upon the subject of his settling here, it being understood at the time that he contemplated a removal. After some further communications upon the subject, it was on both sides for a time suspended, and afterwards finally dropped. March 12th, 1789, having previously received an invitation, he was installed over the Church and Society of Hollis Street, Boston.

Various causes now prevented a re-settlement, and a vacancy ensued of seven years. The necessary expenses incurred by the past war, had greatly impoverished the people ; and the parish, small as it then was, felt the burden of meeting its necessary expenses, and complained of it. Its pastor had gone, and its great patron, Mr. Pemberton, having previously become offended with Dr. Gordon, relative to a trifling circumstance,\* in which he thought himself treated with indignity by Dr. Gordon, had bequeathed by will his whole property, including this very church itself, and most of the pews in it, in trust for the benefit of the poor of the town of Boston, which, by previous promise, was at his death to have been left to the parish for the sole support of its future ministers,— pressed, also, by Dr. G. for the payment of back salary still due him,— unable to liquidate past, and much

\* Appendix, Note E.

more to incur new expenses,— all these considerations combined, led to a proposal in September, 1788, of a reunion with the Second or Upper Parish for one year, by way of trial ; provided their minister, the Rev. John Bradford, officiate one half the time in this church. Committees from both societies were chosen to confer upon the subject ; but having met, the ideas of each relating to the terms, were so wide apart, that the proposal was relinquished altogether, and the pulpit supplied by occasional preaching only,— sometimes by subscription, at others by a general tax, and very often the doors of the church were closed, and the parishioners scattered in whatever direction they preferred. The society notwithstanding displayed a steadiness and propriety of conduct, during the whole of this period, truly worthy of commendation, in that, while many societies had been torn in sunder by sectarians, and the peace and order of families destroyed by unnatural divisions on religious subjects, where union ought invariably to exist, it preserved itself from all such difficulties, and continued to walk firm and undeviating in the order and fellowship of the gospel.

On Sunday morning, April 22d, 1792, your present pastor first preached here from Luke ii. 14th verse : “ Glory be to God in the highest, and on earth peace, and good will towards men.” Soon after the small pox broke out in Boston and the vicinity, so as to require a general inoculation, and the public services of this temple were, for a time, suspended. As soon as possible they were resumed, and officiating occasionally here, till accepting an invitation the parish had extended to him to become their pastor, he was ordained over this religious society in the afternoon of March 27th, 1793, the parish consisting of only fifty-four families.

Rev. Joseph Eckley, of Boston, preached the sermon from 2 Cor. i. 24 : “ Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy.”

September 25th, 1810, late Dr. John Warren, of Boston, presented the two volumes of the Pulpit Bible we still make use of.

In 1815, Dr. Belknap’s Sacred Poetry was introduced in place of Dr. Watts’s Psalms and Hymns, which had been previously used here.

March 24th, 1817. The subject of a separation of this parish together with the upper, from the town of Roxbury, was a second

time agitated, and a committee of five persons chosen to investigate the propriety of an application to the General Court for an act of incorporation into a distinct town.\*

The parish still increasing, this church underwent an enlargement May 12, 1820, of thirteen feet in clear back, and complete repair within and without in its present form, new pulpit, new long pews instead of the former square ones, excepting those on the wall, new ceiling of the whole church, by means of which addition thirty pews on the lower floor were given, besides ten in the galleries.

On the 29th May, 1821, the bell which had been presented to the society by late Gov. John Hancock, in 1783,† was removed, and the present one placed in its stead.

In 1825 the burying yard was enlarged. Same year, September 25th, Ebenezer May, of Paris, France, who was born here, sent to us a large pulpit folio Bible, for the acceptance of this society, with a request that it might be kept in the pulpit.

March 29th, 1830, the pews were first voted to be assessed in this church, instead of a parish tax on real and personal estates for the support of the ministry, as had heretofore been the case.

In the summer of 1831, the erection of Eliot Hall commenced, and on the 17th day of January, 1832, being completed, it was dedicated in the afternoon by prayer.‡

July 22d, 1832, our delightful organ first poured forth its sweet tones of melody in this church.§

In 1833 the whole cemetery was greatly beautified, by trees being placed in it, and enclosed within iron railing, obtained partly by subscription, but principally from the munificence of a generous individual.||

February 10, 1836, Rev. George Whitney, of West Roxbury, was installed here at 2 o'clock, P. M.

July 3, 1836, Mr. Greenwood's selection of hymns was introduced by previous vote of the parish.

In order to the completion of our history I have only to add now the few recent occurrences already as familiarly known to your-

\* See Appendix, Note F.

† See Appendix, Note G.

‡ See Appendix, Note H.

§ See Appendix, Note I.

|| Mrs. Maria F. Greenough, now Mrs. Sumner.

selves as to me. And if I have already, or in so doing may be again compelled to speak in the *first* person oftener than I have been accustomed to do, or even approve, my only apology must be found in the occasion, and its consequent personality.

Five or six years since an English gentleman \* accidentally residing here, purchased an estate bordering upon Jamaica Pond, and conceived the plan of gathering an Episcopal Church. There were, at the time, not more than five or six families of that denomination among us, and all but two of them worshipped with us.

After a time a religious service in the Episcopal mode was held in a private house by some few clergymen of that order. Soon after a cellar and foundation were prepared for a small church, but failed in further progress, through deficiency of means; both Trinity and St. Paul's churches in Boston, though solicited, withholding their aid, considering the object to be premature.

At length a gentleman in Brookline, being willing to unite and aid in the erection of a building, a site was purchased, and a small chapel, called St. John's Chapel, erected thereon. It commenced building Sept. 22, 1840, and was consecrated on Sunday evening, July 25, 1841.

Two rival candidates were next selected for the Rectorship, but a decided difference in preference having prevailed among the friends of each, a disruption took place, and left the society disabled from proceeding. An Episcopal clergyman finally purchased the church, became its rector, and divine service is still held there.

The great increase of the city of Boston, and consequently of its vicinity, has largely contributed, within a few years past, to swell the population of what is called Jamaica Plain Parish, and greatly enhanced the value of estates thereon. Persons of different religious denominations; some of the Catholic, some of the Swedenborgian, some of the Methodist, some of the Universalist, and some of the Baptist name, have recently found their residence among us. One gentleman from Boston of the latter denomination,† in union with some others from Brookline, previously established here, projected the formation of a Baptist Society. And in December, 1840, the village hall was obtained for Sunday ser-

\* Mr. Charles Beaumont.

† Mr. John Moffat.

vices therein, and on 13th of same month these services commenced. Since that period, a site has been purchased in view of the erection of a meeting-house. It is said, however, to be suspended at present in consequence of some disunion. But neither that, nor the other has at all injured our own society. On the contrary, a new interest and impulse seems to have been imparted therefrom. Both the societies carry with them our kind feelings and prayers for their spiritual improvement, and for their success in doing good, and promoting the cause and interests of our common master.

We are perfectly willing that every one may worship God as seemeth meet unto him, as we do ourselves.

“ And censuring none, are zealous still  
To follow as to learn God’s will.”

It will never be our fault then, I trust, so far as in us lieth, if we do not live *peaceably* and in *love*, too, with them, and with all men, honoring every where such as bear the stamp of Jesus.

I would here simply remark, as a somewhat curious coincidence, but not conveying the smallest reproach, that the three individuals with whom the three societies now here originated, have been successively disappointed, not in the loss, but in the very attainment of the object itself. The founder of this society is the person of his own selection and settlement as his minister ; the founder of the Episcopal Church in the result as just stated ; and the originator of the Baptist society has already quitted it from some dissatisfaction. Not one of the three originated with the old Roxbury inhabitants, who have never been remarkable for their love of restless innovation, of perpetual novelty, or unceasing changes in religion ; but sought the good old tried paths, and walked safely and surely and quietly in them. But times have now changed, and men with them. And both the times and men, too, require perhaps that now it should be otherwise, and we unhesitatingly acquiesce in the result.

But for ourselves, we love this habitation of our God, this temple where his honor dwelleth. Our fathers worshipped in this place. Its interests, therefore, are or ought to be identified with every thing that is holy, lovely and venerable in our recollections ;

and sooner shall our right hand forget its cunning, and our tongues cleave to the roof of our mouths, than we forget *thee*, thou fair city of our God.

In the review of the half century now gone, we are insensibly led to observe the incessant changes in the characters and conditions of individuals, of families and societies.

The whole scenery of our lives is perpetually shifting, and there are endless variations in the aspect of every thing with which we are conversant upon earth.

Different maxims are adopted, different plans pursued, different opinions entertained. As each successive wave upon the sea shore obliterates the former, so does each generation the manners, opinions and habits of the last. And they are almost as different from the past as though they pertained to a different race.

Our days, too, upon earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding. The earth is continually opening her bosom even to the slightest tread. How soon, too, does the feeble age of infancy give way to the sportive amusements of childhood. The bloom and freshness of youth and beauty but scarcely *appear* before they begin to fade ; and after a few short years of maturity and vigor are passed, the evil days arrive, when we are compelled to say, we have no pleasure in them, and then God changes our countenances and sends us away. And what changes have I not seen in them ! What changes the most painful and unlooked for, did not even a single day bring forth before both your eyes and my own in the sudden removal of my so much loved colleague !\*

The lapse of a few years only deprives us of the society we had been accustomed to value and enjoy. Old friends and acquaintance are withdrawn from our side ; and if our pilgrimage be protracted upon earth, we are left solitary and alone in the midst of a new generation that know and understand us not.

Brief as the period of my residence with you seems to have been, and it appears to me only as a *short dream* of the night, I have lived to see consigned to their final resting place, every man in this society who was head of a family when I came into it, and every woman of the same, with the exception of four only,— all of whom are far advanced in the *vale* of years ; and I have been co-

\* Rev. George Whitney died April 2, 1842. See Appendix, Note J.

temporary, also, in many instances (even within five miles) with three or four of the several successors of christian ministers, who, I trust, are now in heaven. All the members of the Council, both clergymen and laymen, who ordained me here, have long since passed into the land where all things are forgotten ; the last of them (Rev. Dr. Porter) nine years since. And I now stand the oldest *ordained* minister connected with a parish without a colleague, and who still preaches, of all christian denominations, throughout the commonwealth with the exception of one only,\* and yet it seems to me as though I myself were but of yesterday.

A new society has arisen up and yet *another* and *another* since my residence here, in the place of the old ; and instead of the fathers I see only six pews now occupied, *on the same spot* in this house by their descendants. Strangers to *them* fill *their* seats, and the places that once knew them will know them no more forever. My own immediate family has had its sad bereavements, too, and it is not with *me*, as it once was.

But standing this day as I do between the congregation of the living and the dead, I have every cause of cheerfulness and grateful recollections. The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places, yea, and I have a goodly heritage. I thank God for his unmerited mercies. Without boasting of startling achievements, (for I never sought such,) we have gone on for half a century in a quiet, unostentatious way, such as I always have loved, and always shall, — quiet, unostentatious !

Ours, has been a singularly favored society. Peace has spread over us her brightest banner. God grant that celestial dove may here fix her lasting abode, and bless you and your children's children, long after I shall be gathered to the dust of my fathers, and have no further concern in any thing that is done under the sun.

What traces of change in society, likewise, has the past fifty years left behind them !

When I first came amongst you, this was a quiet, retired, moral little village, and there was not a single allurement, either to physical, moral or religious intemperance or excess to be found within

\* Rev. Dr. Peter Eaton, of Boxford, Mass., my College mate.

its limits. The simplicity of manners, too, remind of Goldsmith's <sup>old</sup> Deserted Village, —

“ Sweet Auburn, loveliest village of the plain,  
Where health and *virtue* cheered the laboring train.”

Fashionable manners, in all their endless forms and fickleness, were unknown here then. The good dames' visits were made at an early hour in the afternoon, (sometimes by two o'clock,) each with her “ knitting work,” still going on, while engaged in social converse ; and at dusk rolling up their work, and returning home, refreshed from their social intercourse, to their domestic enjoyments and duties, which they wisely and justly considered as paramount to all others. *Their* firesides never tired them, nor did they wish or want any other winter evenings' entertainments than they found around their own happy hearths. Sweet homes, indeed ! filled with well behaved, rosy, industrious boys, and lively, healthy, blooming girls, as full of godly sincerity as they were of godly simplicity, all of whom more than supplied the want of any other amusement. There was godliness with contentment, which is great gain ; and there was more, too, of true happiness in those humble dwellings, than all the modern refinement of art, of wealth or fashion combined, can now boast, or ever impart. Sweet days, indeed, in the recollection as they were in the enjoyment ! But these happy hours must return no more. They are numbered with the years before the flood.

“ These were thy charms, sweet village, joys like these,  
With sweet succession, taught e'en toil to please ;  
These round thy bowers, their cheerful influence shed,  
These were thy charms, but all these charms are fled.”

GOLDSMITH.

There seemed, also, perfect union of purpose and action in almost every *person* and every *thing*. And in this respect, and only respect, in which men have any right to expect, or ever will realize it if they do, “ they had all things in common.” Whenever a new dwelling was contemplated, the whole neighborhood volunteered its services, prepared and stoned the cellar and well, and gave often days of labor to aid and speed on the object.

There existed, also, at that time, but one religious sentiment and

feeling. Like the early Christians, to them there was one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who was above all, and through all, and in all, and one Savior, Jesus Christ the Redeemer of the world. Or, if any difference of opinion did exist amongst them, they who had it, had it to *themselves*. And so it continued till within a very short period. All met and worshipped together in this place. But the fashion of the world passeth away, and here we have no continuing city.

In this whole town there were only three churches and three ministers, all of one heart and of one mind, brothers literally in every kind feeling and affection, and as perfectly known, loved and understood by each other, as though they had been actual brothers.

Now there are eleven churches and eleven ministers, and fifteen other clergymen besides, making in amount twenty-six, and of almost as many varying creeds,—most of them scarcely known to each other even by name, though residing so near, much less by neighborly, or social and friendly intercourse, as formerly.

But we of this society have enjoyed freedom from all those religious contentions and disputes, which do so much mischief every where, and have broken in pieces so many of the fairest societies around us ; and whenever we could no longer agree, we have peaceably separated.

And I owe it in truth and gratitude to say to you this day, my friends, (and I should prove myself an ingrate if I did not,) that your uniform fidelity to all your engagements, your past kindness to me and mine for so many revolving years, your respectful attention to my ministry, your public spirit, your generous sympathies in all my distresses, your moral and religious deportment, ever since my settlement among you have riveted you all to my heart, and will forever endear the memory of my relation to you to my last hour.

Unkindnesses I have received none from any of you, and for all the countless favors you have shown me, the recollection of which I shall carry with me to the grave, may God reward you seven fold into your bosoms. And I doubt not that he will reward you ; for they were intended to promote the cause of truth and goodness through my humble means, and my most fervent prayers and best wishes will always be yours.

I had fondly hoped it would have been my happiness, when-

ever God should see fit to call me to account of my stewardship, to leave you not as sheep without a shepherd, but in the hands of one who I knew loved you, and deserved your love in return ; and who I trusted would never lead you into worldly philosophy for christian truth ; but ask for you the light of Christ, and seek and ask none other for you or himself ; and I prayed that his years might be *many*, and *useful* and *happy* to himself, and your joy be *full* and *complete* in him here, and glorious hereafter. But God has ordered it otherwise. He destroyeth the hope of man, and has removed from beneath me that pillar upon which I had so fondly leaned.

My bright hope has now vanished away, and I am left alone to encourage and sustain both you and myself in our painful conflicts. He was indeed a burning and a shining light, and for a season we rejoiced in it. He had fulfilled *much*, but promised *more*. Alas ! that God has quenched that light in darkness, and that it shall no more cheer our earthly path. Yet has it arisen bright in the heavens, and shall for ever continue its cloudless splendor there. Let us be thankful that we enjoyed it so far, and consider him who has now gone from us not as lost to us forever, but as still living about us and for us, and interested in our welfare, and as a part of that treasure we have laid up for ourselves in heaven.

My friends, on this occasion a thousand awakening reflections crowd upon my mind. I have reached the appointed age of man. I have administered fifty years at this altar the word, and broken to you the bread of life. How successfully or otherwise my ministry has been, can be ascertained only at the great rising day. I lament that it has not accomplished more, and that it has fallen so short both of my own wishes and duties, and of your prayers and my own. Yet at this moment (and why should I conceal it ?) I enjoy a gladdening testimony that, however defective I may have been, my heart condemns me not in my *habitual* desires or labors to do what I could. Nor do I recollect a single instance during that period, — and this is a thoughtful one of my life, — that I ever did not cheerfully sacrifice self-convenience and self-indulgence to the faintest call of sorrow, or of parochial duty, affection or service to the humblest of my people as much as to the most exalted ; and that my most earnest desires and efforts have been to

promote amongst them all a spirit of calm, unostentatious piety to God, of love, kindness and good will to the whole family of man. I am not aware that I have forgotten or neglected any one. If I have, the omission was perfectly unintentional. And I hope that all my imperfections, of which I know I have sufficient, may be viewed with christian charity, and consigned to that oblivion into which I myself must shortly pass. It would have been gratifying to me this day to have seen some more visible fruit of my labors. But it is best that I should not. God often orders that one shall sow the grain, and another come afterwards and reap the crop. But if the crop be insured, all that could be desired is effected.

I say nothing of the few who honor Christ at his sacred altar, or of my regret, too, which I deeply feel, at the neglect of the institution of christian baptism, which seems to extend to most of our churches. Such a growing indifference to the institutions of the gospel is, to my mind at least, nearly allied to a sickly condition of the religious character ; and when the christian Sabbath, the christian church and christian ministry, are considered of doubtful authority, all christian piety will soon be swept away with them. Outward forms, let what will be said to the contrary, notwithstanding, are still the great avenues to the heart and affections ; and if these go not along with our religion its wheels will drag heavily along. Yet it is hard to persuade myself that the neglect in either instance, I am speaking of, has arisen among you from apathy. I rather apprehend it has been grounded in too much fear, — which time and correct knowledge are now destroying, and I hope 'ere long may be *totally* destroyed. And my firm belief is, that this people have been as moral and religious as in most societies, where, under religious fanaticism and extravagance, throngs have crowded the altar for a time, but soon have fallen away, and left cold indifference behind.

The present is indeed, in a singular degree, an age of feverish excitement and excess in almost every thing, — fashionable, scientific, political, moral and religious. There is abroad a restless agitation, a morbid desire of innovation, and after all still craving something new ; and unsatisfied with it when possessed, till melancholy increases as men advance in years, “ like shadows lengthening towards the close of the day.”

Men, it appears to me, are leaving reason and common sense

(the best sense of any other) in search of wonders and miracles to be performed. I am not constitutionally formed for any of these things, and should think it my duty to repress it, if I were.

In my opinion, they destroy the independence of every man's own mind, which he ought sacredly to maintain ; they fetter his own thoughts and sentiments, cramp them, and embody them in party opinions and over-heated actions, however remote from his own, and produce a sort of temporary insanity. And men say and do, in an excited state of feeling, what they repent of in their calmer and wiser judgment.

So in religion, I have no sympathy with religious excitements, and far less with religious ostentation. The design of *true* religion is to repress the *passions*, not to excite them ; for excited passions are by thousands often mistaken for solid *principles*,\* and mere *animal* impulse for sacred *truth* ; and under their blinding and bewildering influence you find men setting up for teachers where they ought only to be learners. And it requires no prophetic eye to see, and no prophetic tongue to foretell that, every thing in science, or religion, or politics, carried to excess, must 'ere long produce reaction, and finally give way to the very opposite extreme, and then the marble insensibility of death succeeds. Whatever is got up in excess, (be it what it may,) reason and common sense, whenever they return, will finally put down. Mere animal excitement in every thing must soon exhaust itself ; and, if there be not strong principle behind it, the end will be worse than the beginning. These are truths which every observing man must often have witnessed, and when you who are now young shall see these things come to pass, as you all certainly sooner or later will, then will you understand "that a prophet has been among you."

In all cases, to my mind, a substitution of expedients for principles is, to say the least, neither a judicious or durable course. " Whenever in any thing excitement is made the great instrument of success, and the people led blindfold along by sympathy, like a herd of animals moved by an impulse they are unable to explain, and some not to understand, then its fruit in the end will be disappointment," † and what in the spirit of moderation would have proved

\* See Appendix, Note K.

† Rev. E. S. Gannett's Election Sermon.

a rich blessing, dwindles away into an ultimate evil. How wise the apostle's declaration, "Let your moderation be known unto all men."

Many of the vices of the world are nothing more than virtues abused. Extravagance is generosity carried to excess. Too much frugality degenerates into covetousness, worldly wisdom into low cunning, benevolence into servility, humility into meanness, and all fanaticism and enthusiasm in the abuse of the religious sentiment.

"In a late similar excitement in Boston, a person met a Christian neighbor, who took him by the hand, and besought him to go to these meetings, and become a Christian. I have done so, said he, and have got religion. I am at last a Christian. You are a Christian, then, all at once, said the other. You profess to act strictly on Christian principles. I am glad of it. I congratulate you. Suppose now we have a settlement of our little accounts between us. Pay me that thou owest. No, said this new born child of grace, turning away on his heel, religion is *religion*, and business is *business*." \*

Now what a profanation of religious truth is here ! God deliver you, my friends, from such a delusion, and never, O never forget that you serve God, and are religious in various ways, — each of which, though not the whole, is, nevertheless, an essential branch of the whole. We serve God as truly in the virtues of a good life, — in correct morals, exemplary manners, and honest, honorable, upright conduct in our transactions with our fellow-men, as when we bow in God's temple. Fidelity to our trusts, and punctuality in our engagements, industry in our business, from motives of Christian faith and obedience, domestic economy, an old fashion virtue, indeed, (but not the less valuable for that,) the punctual discharge of our debts, and guarding men from the miseries and delusions of wild fanaticism, and teaching them a *truly* Christian rational faith and a holy practice, those are genuine religion. And whoever would separate these duties, would sever in sunder what God and Christ, reason and virtue have joined together. He lives most in accordance with his immortal destination, and is after all the best Christian, who has proved himself the most virtuous man ; who lives the best life of piety to God, and of truth, and justice, and honesty to men.

\* Rev. M. I. Mott's Sermon, published March 27, 1842.

But error so often assumes the shape of truth, evil of good, and good of evil, that what comes to us wearing the garb of virtue, is often found to be real vice.

Extraordinary religious meetings on *week days* seldom accomplish a good, but often a bad purpose. The Scriptures in this, as in every other respect, give the wisest direction, "Six days shalt thou labor, and do all that thou hast to do. But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God, and in it thou shalt do no manner of work." And if people will reverence that day in the manner they ought to do, instead of visiting abroad and receiving visits at home, they will find full enough to exercise their practice during that week at least. Frequent religious discussions usually end either in infidelity on the one hand, or fanaticism on the other, and generate a restless, unsatisfied faith. Besides which, they bewilder the judgment, and heat the temper, oftener than they inform the mind or improve the character. And that unnatural thirst that is always craving after something more is nearly allied to the drunkard's thirst, "always dry, because he has drunk too much already."

As to sectarian opinions I have not the least sympathy with any of them. And in all my preaching I have aimed, as far as I consistently could with a sense of truth and duty, to avoid all questions of doubtful disputation.

No man differs from another on religious subjects, if he feel a deep interest in them, and leaves him with exactly the same kindly feelings with which he met him. Besides which, they serve to enkindle bitterness, and to extinguish that charity and good will which Jesus Christ came on earth to promote.

Such results I daily witness, and witness often, even among men of great learning and of deep piety. And, with this conviction every day more and more fully confirmed, it has been my object to avoid religious speculations, and to dwell with constancy on the practical duties of piety and of life, not to feed your minds with chaff or husks that the swine do eat, but to inculcate the calm, retired, noiseless, practical duties of life, such as come home to every man's feelings and conscience in the daily and even hourly walks of business, in all his various circumstances, stations and conditions. My aim, in short, has been to be a herald of right eousness, of peace and truth, to show you the bitter evils of sin, that

always have and always will follow from it ; and the sweet fruits of a virtuous course, — to make men kinder, better, — better husbands, better wives, better children, better neighbors and friends, more sympathetic in all the relative, calm, social, domestic, and the noiseless religious duties of life and of love. This to my mind is the best of all other religions. He that doeth these things shall never be moved. And your candor and kindness have always encouraged, strengthened, and gladdened all my labors for their promotion.

Before long now, the darkness of the night must close around, and hide me from the face of day. Understand me, then, it is for your own sakes, that you may be better edified under other and fresher instructions, and continue in union and affection, that I now express to you my earnest desire that the recent painful void we all feel, and which God, no doubt for the wisest, though to us mysterious purposes, has made among us, may be supplied as soon as convenient. A new interest will thereby be excited, which cannot be felt in *me*. I know full well, that the pulpit services of any one who has reached seventy years, and preached fifty, cannot be desirable, especially to the younger, which constitutes the larger portion of every society. God can do as well without me as with me ; and be assured that I shall cordially coöperate with you in the desirable object of seeing you all happy and united again, in a faithful successor to him who has gone from us forever. But I do earnestly beseech that you may settle a serious, religious believer in the *Bible*, as God's own word, every day becoming more evident ; and that you will assemble on his holy Sabbaths, not as you would go to a theatre to be amused, as with a sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal, (as I fear is the case with a great many,) not for excitement of the *passions*, but for the cultivation of solid, deep-rooted *principles* ; for one ounce of good principle is worth tons of passionate or ostentatious parade.

God has promised to be with his church even to the end of the world, and upon this promise we may unhesitatingly rely. You will not be alone, therefore, for God is with you ; and I hope, if he permit, to be with you, too, till your joys shall be fulfilled. You will not forget, however, that new domestic obligations, new cares, and new duties now devolve upon me, and that he who provideth not for his own, especially for those of his own household hath

denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.\* But I hope cheerfully to follow Providence, wherever its guidance may lead me. And you will all live alike in my heart and affections as long as life remains, and be constantly borne in my prayers to the throne of the heavenly grace. Let me press upon you, then, this day, to remember how ye have received, and to hold fast and repent, that no man take your crown. And now that these services are fast diminishing, and will be so greatly abridged, till the "last link is broken," O give me the happiness to behold you stedfast and immovable in your Christian faith and charity, even in that faith once delivered to the saints, --- not as children carried about by every wind of divers and strange doctrines, by the sleight of men. But remain fixed, steady, unchanged in your good old fashioned principles and holy walk with God. Hold fast the form of sound words, and mistake not, substitute not a false philosophy after the rudiments of men, and not after Christ, as his truth. Remember that He is the chief corner-stone, in whom all the building fitly joined groweth into an holy temple in the Lord. He is the finisher as well as the author of your faith, and you are complete in him, wanting nothing. For his religion is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. He alone it is that should come, nor will we ever look for another. Hold fast, therefore, that which is good. And whatsoever things are pure, lovely, honest and of good report, if there be any virtue or any praise, think of these things. Wherefore, I will not be negligent, brethren, to put you in remembrance of them, though ye already know them, and I trust are established in their truth; yet I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir up your pure minds by putting you in remembrance, knowing that shortly I must put off this tabernacle, even as the Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me.

Finally, my brethren, the time is short. After a few more suns shall have arose and set, a few more moons have waxed and waned, a few more years have revolved their short round, every individual who now hears me will have completed the period of his probation, and have passed to other scenes, and, I pray, to higher services in that temple on high, not made with hands, eternal in the heav-

\* Immediately after divine service the society met and *unanimously* voted back to the surviving minister the same salary they had given to his colleague, with an *additional sum*, to what he had relinquished at the installation of Mr. W.

ens. There the faithful shepherd and the redeemed flock shall meet again, and no withering years, or blasting mildew shall interrupt, nor rising cloud shall cast a shade around its everlasting sun. "Mutual congratulations shall there burst from every tongue, and thrilling joys shall vibrate from every heart. One shall be the burden of each exalted song; one the ascription of ceaseless praise;" and all those who have been wise upon earth shall shine forth as the brightness of the firmament, and they who have turned many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever in the kingdom of our God.

My friends! you have listened to my instructions, and received my sympathies and counsels. Leave me not, till I have blessed you.

And now may God Almighty, even the God of our fathers bless you, and grant you everlasting welfare. May your souls improve under the means of religious instruction he may grant you. And when you die, may you be presented without spot before the face of God.

Let me bless you yet again. Brethren, peace be to this hallowed temple of our God. Peace be to your families and children, to your habitations, and to all that you have. And whether the remainder of my days be upon earth longer or shorter, this will be my final parting counsel, and the last prayer that breathes from my quivering lips, "Live in peace and the God of love and of peace be with you."

And now, O God, —

Accept the poor remains of life,  
And health, which thou dost give;  
And when my work on earth is done,  
Receive my spirit to thy throne!

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[The following prayer was then offered.]

Father of mercies and God of all grace! send down thy spirit, we beseech thee, all powerful from above, to give efficacy to thy

word, which has, at this time, been announced unto us,— and success to all the means, here employed for the promotion and extension of the kingdom of Christ among us. Pour out the best of thy blessings, we entreat thee, upon this beloved flock of our Lord Jesus Christ. May peace be ever within these walls, and all those who love her prosperity prosper, and be gathered at last into the fold of Christ. And let blessings without number be upon their heads long after he who now offers this supplication in their behalf, shall have passed into other worlds, and be remembered no more upon earth.

Let all, we entreat thee, who *now* do, or may *hereafter* minister at this altar, be clothed with purity, with peace and truth. And he, who is still waiting for whatever further services thou hast yet in reserve for him to perform, be ever girded about with the breast-plate of righteousness. May his usefulness be as protracted as his life, and may he be found at the last amongst those who have been faithful to the death ; which we humbly ask in the name of Jesus Christ, through whom, to thyself, be all honor and glory forever. Amen.

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[The services were then closed by singing the 512th Hymn, L. M.]

1. How blest is he whose tranquil mind,  
When life declines, recalls again  
The years that time has cast behind,  
And reaps delight from toil and pain.
  
  2. So when the transient storm is past,  
The sudden gloom and driving shower,  
The sweetest sunshine is the last,  
The loveliest is the evening hour.
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## A P P E N D I X.

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### NOTE A. Page 8.

JAMAICA Plain is one of the loveliest spots almost any where to be found. It is four miles and a half south-west of Boston, from State street. The soil is light and gravelly, easy to cultivate, the surface black loam, not more, generally, than six inches deep. The land abounds in brooks and springs. Jamaica Pond, or lake, as it is now called, covers about one hundred and sixty acres, and in its deepest place is from sixty to seventy feet; and supplies, by means of an aqueduct, the city of Boston with water perfectly clear, and so soft as to be excellent for washing, and for all culinary purposes. The Plain itself is environed by beautifully sloping hills, and forms a perfect basin, so sheltered from the east winds, that they do not reach it for some hours after they are keenly felt in Boston, and then so mitigated as renders it peculiarly favorable to the comfort and restoration of persons afflicted with pulmonary complaints. On account of its peculiar healthiness, it has been denominated the American "Mont Pelier." Malthus, in his Treatise upon population, remarks that "there are some villages in England where the annual deaths are fewer than in any other places in the known world, in which the mortality is so small as one in sixty, or one in seventy-five." (Vol. i. p. 168.) He makes his calculations for twenty years on the average in Europe, and at the south in America. But for forty-nine years last past, it is ascertained from the most accurate data, that during that whole period, the annual deaths have averaged only as one to ninety-nine and forty-sixtieths, including accidental ones.

Large quantities of hay and vegetables of all kinds are raised here, and disposed of in the Boston markets. The whole parish, indeed, seems like one perfect garden, resembling the best cultivated villages

near London. The inhabitants are principally wealthy and respectable farmers. There are here several gentlemen's elegant seats, beautifully situated on the banks of the lake, and elsewhere, together with cottages of private gentlemen, who retire, every evening, from their business in the city, and pass as much of their time as consists with it, in this delightful spot, and in the summer season it is always crowded with boarders. Something of the steady population, therefore, is fluctuating.

The First Parish in Roxbury, or Rocksborough, as it was originally called, is the parent of all the others throughout the town. From it originated the second in Spring street, and from that *principally* the third, or Jamaica Plain Parish.

Jamaica Plain, from its proximity to the pond, was originally called the "Pond Plain." How it changed its name has never been really ascertained. There are many legends upon this inquiry, but none of them entirely satisfactory. One is, that it was so baptized in consequence of gentlemen from Jamaica spending their summers here; which circumstance, if true, might at once account for it. But it cannot be ascertained, that any other than Timothy Penny, Esq., who came to this country not earlier than 1767, ever had a residence here; whereas, Hugh Thomas, April 7th, 1677, ninety years previous, conveyed his property for the benefit of a school, "to the people at the "Jamaica end of the town of Roxbury.

Another more probable, but not altogether satisfactory account is, that a gentleman by the name of \_\_\_\_\_, from some unknown cause, disliking his wife, quitted London, informing her that he was going to Jamaica on business. Hearing nothing from him for a very long period, she at length embarked for Jamaica, in expectation of finding him there. But, to her great surprise, she could not learn that he had ever been at the island. And a vessel from that place, going direct to Boston, she took passage, arrived safe, and having frequently related the circumstance, at length obtained accidental intelligence that an Englishman had for some time past been residing with a poor family in Roxbury, "at the Pond Plain," where, most unwelcomely to himself, she actually found him. The story of his saying he was going to Jamaica, was so often and ludicrously told, that the inhabitants *derisively*, at first, called it *Jamaica Plain*, which name it has since retained.

The last, and to me most probable account I have heard was, that the Indians, who at that time were numerous here, used frequently

to go to the street in Roxbury for rum, and having accidentally met with some Jamaica spirit, that greatly pleased them, they would always afterwards inquire for it, saying, "Indian love Jamaica;" in consequence of which, the retailers called them *Jamaica* folks, or Indians; from which circumstance, the name became gradually familiar, and all the inhabitants of this part of the town at length acquired the name of *Jamaica* Plain people, instead of *Pond* Plain folks, as they had been usually called before.

NOTE B. Page 10.

The house had been removed in 1760 from its former site, where now stands the mansion of the late D. S. Greenough, Esq., built by Commodore Joshua Loring the same year, of whom Mr. Pemberton purchased it for that object.

NOTE C. Page 12.

On July 10th, 1689, Rev. John Eliot, the first minister of Roxbury, gave by deed about seventy-five acres of land "for the support of a school and schoolmaster at that part of Roxbury, commonly called Jamaica or Pond Plain, for teaching and instructing the children of that end of the town, and to no other use, intent or purpose, under any color or pretence whatever." [*Benjamin P. Williams's Address, delivered at the Dedication of Eliot Hall, on Jamaica Plain, January 17th, 1832.*]

This school in The Life of John Eliot, by Convers Francis, published in Boston by Hilliard, Gray & Co. in 1836, p. 313, is said, "by his (Eliot's) active agency to be a school of high character, established in Roxbury, for the support of which he bequeathed a considerable part of his own property. This free school was the admiration of the neighboring towns; and Mather states, as the result of its influence, that Roxbury had afforded more scholars, first for the college, and then for the public, than any other town of its bigness, or, if I mistake not, of twice its bigness, in all New-England."

Now Mather was altogether mistaken. The school to which he alluded was endowed not by John Eliot, but by Thomas Bell, and was given to the *whole* town, not to a single portion of it, in 1671,

for a grammar school.\* Nor has there ever been an individual prepared for college in the *Eliot School*. No other than the English common town school branches have been taught in it to this day. As an historical fact, I deem it important to correct the mistake (and a strange one indeed) of Mather, as quoted in the above life of Eliot.

Eliot Hall, on Jamaica Plain, erected in 1831, was built from the income of funds arising from John Eliot's donation of lands, and therefore bears his name. He died in Roxbury, May 26, 1690, aged eighty-six years, and was buried in the tomb with his wife in the old burying-place, at the foot of Roxbury street, the full and satisfactory evidence of which I have in my possession, though so often and so long disputed and said, as of Moses, that no man knoweth his sepulchre.

Dr. Gordon thought that the fee simple of land for a burying-place should be in the parish, or it would be a violation of moral right otherwise so to appropriate it. He was a man of high moral sense, and by means of it sometimes incurred offence. While he had enough of the *fortiter in re*, he lacked greatly the *suaviter in modo*.

When the late Gov. John Hancock was treasurer of Harvard College, there was great delay on his part in the settlement of his accounts.† Late Rev. Dr. Samuel Cooper, of Brattle Street Church, Boston, and Dr. Gordon talked freely together of it, and it was finally agreed between them, that at the next Overseer's meeting he should introduce a motion for the immediate settlement of the treasurer's accounts, and which Dr. C. was to second. But Dr. Gordon spoke so plainly his mind of the "*gross neglect*" of the treasurer, though so often urged to do it," that the manner was thought by Dr. C., who was perfectly mild and polite in every thing, to be *as gross*, and therefore he forbore to utter a syllable upon the subject, and it passed off at that meeting in perfect silence. This circumstance so greatly offended Mr. Hancock, that he removed immediately from the Plain into Boston, and dropped all future intercourse whatever with Dr. Gordon.‡

The estate he then left, now the property of Nathaniel Curtis, Esq., was purchased by Gov. Hancock of the late Dr. Lemuel Hayward, of Boston, by exchange for seven or eight shares on Long Wharf,

\* See R. G. Parker's Sketch of the Grammar School in Roxbury, 1826.

† See Josiah Quincy's History of Harvard College, 1840.

‡ Nichols's Anecdotes of Literature. See Index to Vol. ix. for Rev. Wm. Gordon. Gentleman's Magazine for 1807, an obituary notice of Dr. Gordon.

Boston, then valued at fifty dollars per share,— all of which, a few years since, at Dr. Hayward's death, were appraised at one hundred thousand dollars.

March 12, 1781, the following votes were passed at a parish meeting. In order to show the immense depreciation of the then paper currency, I here transcribe.

"*Voted*, to raise the sum of £15,000, lawful money, to pay Dr. William Gordon's salary, fire-wood, and other necessary charges for said precinct. Also, voted to Nathaniel Brewer £90, lawful money, (\$300,) for taking care of the meeting-house last year." Both which votes greatly surprised me. But my surprise was soon at an end, when I found, at a subsequent meeting held June 26, following same year, "voted £200 (\$666 66) to William Gordon, in *hard money*, instead of the £15,000 in *paper*, which was voted him at the last annual meeting. And to Nathaniel Brewer £1 12s., (\$5 33,) instead of the £90, lawful money, voted him at the last meeting for taking care of the meeting-house the year past."

#### NOTE D. Page 12.

The following is a copy of the vote passed at a meeting of the town of Roxbury, August 4, 1796.

At a legal meeting of the freeholders and other inhabitants of the town of Roxbury, held at the meeting-house in the Easterly Parish, on Thursday, fourth day of August, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-six.

The second article in the warrant being read and considered, the town thereupon unanimously *voted*, That the waters of Jamaica Pond belong to the town, and are and ever have been held under their direction and at their disposal, and that it is the opinion of this meeting, that the design now attempting to be carried into execution by the Aqueduct Corporation, of drawing water from Jamaica Pond, (so called,) for the purpose of conveying the same to the town of Boston, by subterraneous pipes, if carried into effect, will be a daring attack upon the rights and property of the said town of Roxbury, will operate to the great injury of the town, and more especially to such of its inhabitants as are proprietors, or live upon Jamaica Plain, the value of whose estates, we conceive, will be materially affected thereby. And the Selectmen, to wit, Hon. John Read, Esq., Mr. John Davis, Mr. Jacob Weld, Ebenezer Seaver, Esq., and Mr. John

Williams, together with Hon. John Lowell, Dr. Thomas Williams, Deacon David Weld, Major Ebenezer Whiting, David S. Greenough, and Martin Brimmer, Esqrs., be a committee in behalf of the town, with full power to use all lawful means to prevent any waters being drawn from said pond for the purpose aforesaid, and to prosecute any person or persons, or society who shall draw the said waters for the purpose aforesaid, or for any other purpose, not heretofore expressly granted at a legal town meeting.

A true copy. Attest,

STEPHEN WILLIAMS, JR.

*Town Clerk.*

NOTE E. Page 13.

The trifling circumstance here alluded to, was this: Dr. Gordon one morning calling on Mr. Pemberton, fastened his horse to the front fence, which had been newly painted. He requested him to remove him to a tree near by, which Dr. G. declined doing. Mr. P. then called his servant, and ordered him to do it. Dr. G. peremptorily forbid him; and when Mr. P. repeated his order, left the house and refused to go in. This gave so much umbrage, that he changed his former intentions towards this parish, in behalf of the town of Boston, to whose poor he willed the whole of his property; and refused, during his last illness, to converse with, or even to see Dr. Gordon. "How great a fire a small spark kindleth."

NOTE F. Page 15.

On the 14th of May following, the committee reported an annual saving of \$352 48 to this parish by a separation. A further investigation was voted, and a further report made in April, 1818, confirming the first, and recommending a committee of conference with the second parish, to join in a petition to the next General Court, for a separation of both from the First Parish, and an act of incorporation into a distinct town. This report was unanimously accepted, and a committee chosen for the conference, and the parish adjourned to the second Monday in May following. The report was published, and the meeting again adjourned to second Monday in November, when it was voted yet again to adjourn the meeting to March, 1819, for further investigation. But the committee declining further service, the meeting was accordingly dissolved.

February 10, 1838, p. m. three o'clock, the parish by previous notice assembled at Eliot Hall upon the subject of a separation of this and the Upper Parish from the town of Roxbury for the third time, Committees were appointed respectfully to invite the union and co-operation of the Upper Parish, and to obtain the consent of the Lower Parish for the accomplishment of that object. Then adjourned to Monday evening, February 19th, seven o'clock. Met again February 19th, and adjourned to Thursday Evening, February 22d. Met February 22d, and adjourned to Thursday evening, March 1st.

On Friday morning, February 23d, a petition was presented to the General Court for the separation, by S. G. Goodrich, Senator of Norfolk, with the signatures of all present at the meeting, and a committee appointed to obtain more.

March 22d, 1838, a public town meeting was held, our separation refused, and a committee of the Selectmen and others appointed to attend the General Court's committee, and by all lawful means to oppose it.

The Court's committee had two meetings in the State House, to hear both parties. Gen. William H. Sumner and David S. Greenough for the parish, Judge S. Leland and Mr. Simmonds for the town. The meetings were held in the afternoons of Tuesday, 20th, and Wednesday, 28th inst.

The subject of the separation was finally laid over to the next session of the General Court in January, 1839, for further consideration, and has not since been called up.

#### NOTE G. Page 15.

This bell, weighing one thousand pounds, was cast at Canton, Mass., by Joseph Revere, Esq., obtained partly by subscription, together with the proceeds of the other, and \$140 remaining in treasury, overplus from sale of *new* pews in 1820.

#### NOTE H. Page 15.

On this occasion Benjamin P. Williams, Esq. delivered an appropriate address, which is published.

Order of services at the dedication of Eliot Hall, Jamaica Plain, on Tuesday, January 17, 1832: 1. Introductory Prayer, by Rev.

**Dr. Gray. 2. Address, by Benjamin P. Williams, Esq. 3. Original Hymn, by Dr. Thomas Gray, Jr.**

**TUNE — *Old Hundred.***

Great source of Light, we hail the rays  
 On darkling man whose glory turns ;  
 Those beams that wander from the blaze  
 Which round God's bright pavilion burns.

There in that ever radiant beam,  
 The sacred tree of knowledge grew ;  
 Fresh watered by a holier stream  
 Than Siloam's fountain ever knew.

That tree of life's eternal fruit,  
 A mightier than the Hebrew gave,—  
 And sent to lave its living root,  
 A purer stream than Horeb's wave.

And may it flow, forever fair,  
 Here, as it flowed in days of yore :  
 When God's own spirit kindled there,  
 And bade its living waters pour.

Lord, speed that ray with power to save.  
 From heart to heart, from clime to clime,  
 Above the stars, beyond the grave,  
 Through countless worlds, and endless time.

May unborn thousands here repose  
 In wisdom's light their upward wings ;  
 And drink from every wave that flows,  
 Eternal life's undying springs.

#### **NOTE I. Page 15.**

This organ was built and put up by William Goodrich, organ-builder at Lechmere Point, Cambridge. Obtained by subscription. The committee for its selection were Joseph Curtis, Benjamin P. Williams, Esqrs., Benjamin Bussey, Esq. who subscribed fourth part of the whole expense, and Dr. Thomas Gray, Jr., of Boston, and who for a time first played it.

## NOTE J. Page 15.

Previous to his invitation to settle here, I had long cherished that hope ; in consequence of which, after some conversation with individual friends upon the subject, I submitted the following letter :

*Jamaica Plain, Sept. 28, 1835.*

My dear Friends and Parishioners,— It is now towards forty-four years since my ministry commenced amongst you, (forty-three almost of which I have been your ordained pastor,) and I can certainly bear the most unequivocal testimony to your uniform affection, fidelity, kindness and good feeling. My only wish is that I were more worthy of such expressions of them, as I have received, and am still constantly receiving from you all. In looking back upon the years I have already so happily passed with you, and forward to those few that must now remain of my life, (for at my age, almost sixty-four, I can even at the longest expect them to be few,) and feeling occasional interruptions of my physical strength, which I must expect now to increase rather than to diminish, remind me that I am nearly approaching the age of man, when a preacher ceases to be interesting, at least to the younger portion of his audience. And having, withal, understood, from various individuals of my society, of the acceptableness of Rev. Mr. George Whitney, as a preacher amongst you, (and who is now at liberty,) believing, too, that if he should be as acceptable to you all as I learn he is to many, it would be adding a new and strong link to the chain of union and love, which for so many revolving years has bound our society together in *one*, — and finally feeling, moreover, that a popular young man might be a considerable acquisition to my parish, and especially one with whom I should still labor side by side in perfect harmony and affection during the remainder of my ministry, — all these considerations have, after very mature deliberation, brought me to the conclusion of making to you the following proposition, which I know you will receive and decide on with the same frankness and candor in which I make it, and which on every occasion I have uniformly experienced from you.

The proposition is this, — that, provided it should meet the wishes of my society to have Mr. George Whitney united with me, as colleague or associated pastor, and without the least additional expense whatever to the parish, I shall fully and gladly meet those wishes; and in order for their accomplishment, will relinquish all my salary,

land, &c., now granted me, with the reservation to myself only of the east part of the parsonage, and a privilege in the barn for my horse and chaise ; and will continue still to officiate as large a portion of the time as health and convenience allow ; but most of all, as I think would be grateful to your own wishes.

Gentlemen of the committee, I make this communication through you to the parish, and will thank you to communicate the same to them, in such a manner as may enable them to take the subject of it into as early consideration as may consist with their convenience.

I am, Gentlemen, with great respect, very truly,  
Your sincere and affectionate Pastor,

THOMAS GRAY.

To Joseph Curtis,  
Nathaniel Curtis, and  
Charles W. Greene, Esqrs. } Committee of the Third  
Parish in Roxbury.

P. S. Brethren, if my proposal meets your approbation, then I wish further to state to you, that, provided any dissatisfaction should hereafter arise, either on the part of the parish or the pastor, three month's notice on either side being given, the parochial connection may be dissolved. And this proviso can be inserted in the call to Mr. Whitney for settlement.

THOMAS GRAY.

*October 15, 1835.*

A parish meeting being hereupon called, and the above letter laid before them, after due consultation and deliberation of its purpose, it was voted unanimously to accede to the proposition it contained. I was requested to communicate the result to Mr. Whitney, who, on the 16th instant, sent a written reply of accordance on his part to the parish committee. Another committee was then chosen in addition to the standing parish committee, consisting of Major B. P. Williams, Deacon Joseph Weld, John Prince, John James, Stephen M. Weld, Dr. L. M. Harris, Paul Gore, Moses Williams, and John Ashton, to call and consult with Mr. Whitney and myself upon the time suitable for his installation, and to make the necessary arrangements therefor. The 10th of February, 1836, was fixed upon, as at that time Mr. Whitney's engagement with the Upper Parish would cease.

Order of services at the installation of Rev. George Whitney, as colleague pastor with Rev. Thomas Gray, D. D., over the religious society on Jamaica Plain, on Wednesday, February 10, 1836 :